

ST. ANDREW'S, BLACKROCK & BRAY - 17TH JANUARY 2021

THE PARABLES OF JESUS: THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LUKE 10:25-37)

Welcome and Announcements

"Welcome to our 'Church at Home' service transcript for Sunday 17th January 2021. Today we are continuing our new series looking at the parables of Jesus, by looking at the 'Parable of the Good Samaritan.' I pray that you will be encourage and blessed as you read this today"

- Rev. Andrew Gill

Call to Worship – Psalm 113:1-3

Praise the Lord, you his servants; praise the name of the Lord.

Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,

the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, The earth belongs to you and everything in it, the world and all it's inhabitants were made by you. All our lives we have been surrounded by the blessings of your goodness. Today we praise and worship you, and join with whole fellowship of believers in heaven and on earth in exalting you as God and King.

Merciful God, you are the fount of every blessing, and you know the thoughts of our heart. Lord God, we confess that we have sinned against you, and done evil in your sight. Wash us from the stains of our past sins, and give us grace and power to put away all hurtful things; so that, being delivered from the bondage of sin, we may bring forth worthy fruits of repentance.

Almighty God, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Help us to shine with the radiance of his glory, so that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth. Amen.

Reading - Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Sermon - 'Parables of Jesus; the Good Samaritan'

One of my favourite things about Jesus was the way he told stories. What made him such a great communicator is the way he used a type of story

called 'parable'. These parables are enjoyable to listen to and easy to remember, yet they contain deep spiritual truths about what the Kingdom of God is like. In just a couple of sentences, Jesus gives a lifetime of material to think about, and to bring change into our lives.

This is the second part of a series looking at some parables that Jesus told from Luke's gospel, and today we're looking at the parable of the 'Good Samaritan'. To properly understand the meaning of this story we need to understand why Jesus told it, and who he told it to. It begins with an expert in the religious law coming to Jesus with a question to test him, maybe even trap him. He says, "*Teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" (v.25) Jesus answers his question with another question and says, "*What is written in the Law? How do you understand it?*" (v.26) The lawyer responds by summarising all the commands by saying that we must love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Jesus says, "*You have answered correctly, do this and you will live.*" (v.28)

But then we read that the man, wanting to justify himself asks, "*And who is my neighbour?*" (v.29) He wanted to know who he had to love, and who he was not required to love. He was a lawyer, he wanted to know the small print. He was trying to earn his way to eternal life by following the Law, rather than receiving the free gift that Jesus would give him of a relationship with God by grace. So he asks, who exactly is my neighbour, what are the borders of the command to love? Jesus responds with this story, "*A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, pass by on the other side.*" (vv. 30-32)

The priests were the religious elite. They knew all about God, and their life was dedicated to leading others in worship. For the lawyer that was asking

the question about his neighbour, the priest would have been somebody that he looked up to and respected. As he listened to the story, he would have immediately identified with the priest and would have expected him to be the hero of the tale. So imagine the shock when the priest saw this man and he didn't help him! Then a Levite, who would have helped the priests in the temple, also comes by, sees the man, and passes by on the other side too. These people that you would expect to be the stars of the story, are actually a negative example. They tell us what we should never do.

This twist would have made the man question what his own response would have been in the same situation. Would he have helped the man, or would he too, have passed by on the other side? Maybe we need to ask ourselves that same question. What would we have done? In fact, what do we do? When we see people that are in need of our help what is our initial response? To show compassion, or to avoid and ignore?

But the story with Jesus goes on, *“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense that you may have.’”* (vv.33-35) For us, we tend to use the name ‘Samaritan’ to describe somebody that does a good deed for a stranger. So when we read this story, we expect that this Samaritan will be helpful. But the first listeners of this story would have been surprised that a Samaritan helped this man. The Jews and the Samaritans were not friendly with each other. They had a shared history, but by this stage they had developed different religions, different cultures, different practices, and the Jews looked down on the Samaritans. Even though Samaria was a neighbouring nation to Judea, there was no love between these two people groups. So it would have been shocking that the Samaritan was so kind, and would give us the example of

how to treat others. When he saw him he had compassion, and he did something about it. He went to him, took care of his wounds, shared his possessions, sacrificed his time, gave his money, and was committed to the man until he had recovered. This is a picture of the type of love that we should have for others.

But that is not the end of this story, and we have not reached the full meaning of this story quite yet either. Jesus finishes the story with a question, *“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”* (v.36) By finishing this story by putting the focus on the victim of the attack, we get to the heart of the meaning of this story. You see, by putting ourselves in the place of the priest or the Levite we're shown what not to do, by putting ourselves in the shoes of the Samaritan, we're shown an example of how we should love those in need. But when we put ourselves in the place of the person lying there, half-dead, on the side of the road, it shows us who is our neighbour.

The man who asked the question about his neighbour wanted to live in a world of 'us and them', and only wanted to love the people that looked and thought like him. He would not have wanted a Samaritan family moving in next door to him. He would never have welcomed a Samaritan into his home to share a meal. But when Jesus asks him that question, it forces him to think, if he was in a place of need, how would he want to be treated by others? And of course, in that situation he would welcome the help, no matter what type of person it came from. We need to realise that our neighbour is anyone that is in need, and everyone that we are able to help.

Our world is so divided at the moment, it's divided by race, divided by politics, divided by wealth, divided by opinions and attitudes, even in the church we're divided by theology and styles of worship. But Jesus paints such a different picture of what the Kingdom of God is like, it is not a place

of division, but of love; not of prejudice, but of compassion; not of selfishness, but of mercy.

Of course what makes this story so powerful, and what gives Jesus such authority as he speaks, is that we know, for Jesus this was not just a story, this was how he lived. When Jesus saw people in need, he had compassion on them. He never walked to the other side, but went out of his way to help the poor and the outcast. When we were fully dead in our transgressions, he saw us, and he came from heaven to earth to save us. He sacrificed his life to give us forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. Through our faith in him we know what it is to receive compassion.

At the end of the story, the man listening responds to Jesus's question, and says that the neighbour was the one who showed mercy. And Jesus says to him, and to all of us, *"Go and do likewise."*

Prayer

Father God,

I thank you that after I had fallen into the hands of sin
you showed me your great compassion
by sending Jesus to die for my forgiveness.

Lord, I am sorry for all the times that I have failed
to love my neighbour as myself.

Holy spirit, open my eyes to see those who are hurting,
and open my heart to act with mercy.

Lord Jesus, I have heard your parable of the good samaritan,
help me to go and do likewise. Amen.